Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the title beginning at page 1, line 1, with the following redlined title:

FLEXIBLE WHISK~~ AND METHOD OF ASSEMBLING SAME~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 12, with the following redlined paragraph:

Figure 3 provides a cross-sectional view of the flexible whisk 100 viewed along Section 3-3 of Figure 2. The handle 102 of this embodiment can be formed about a handle core 108, which is encapsulated by a handle cover 110. The handle core 108 may be molded from plastic such as nylon, polypropylene, ABS, or any other material having comparable characteristics. The handle cover 110 can encase the handle core 108 and form an integral flex zone 114 where the distal portion of the flex zone 114 terminates at the coupling 106. The flex zone 114 is a region that allows the whisk-head 104 to resiliently deflect relative to the longitudinal axis of the handle 102 during whisk use. The handle cover 110 and the flex zone 114 may be made from a soft, over-molded thermoplastic elastomer such as ~~Santoprene~~SANTOPRENE®, available from the Monsanto Corporation, or ~~Tekbond~~TEKBOND®, available from the Teknor Apex Corporation. The durometer range of the handle cover 110 and flex zone 114 material may be in the range of 40 – 60 shore A. This range can allow for about 10 – 15 degrees of lateral deflection under heavy whisk use while permitting the whisk-head 104 to quickly "spring back" to its natural (*i.e.*, non-deflected) position. As seen in Figure 3, the handle cover 110 may be formed quite thick around the handle core 108 and even thicker in the region of the flex zone 114 where a cable 112 may be encased therein and disposed between the coupling 106 and the handle core 108. One of ordinary skill in the art, having reviewed this disclosure, will appreciate variations that can be made to this structure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 3, with the following redlined paragraph:

Figures 4-7 illustrate the components of the coupling 106 according the present embodiment. Figure 4, for example, depicts an exploded view of the components comprising the coupling 106. As discussed herein, the various components of the coupling 106 are configured to attach the whisk-head 104 (Figure 3) to the handle 102. The coupling 106 can be comprised of the cable 112, a collar 124, an outer plug 126, an inner plug 130, and an inner plug core 132.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 15, with the following redlined paragraph:

As illustrated in Figure 5, the inner plug 130 may be configured with a gear-like cross section with a plurality of protuberances located on the outer surface of the inner plug 130. Likewise, the outer plug 126 (Figure 6) can contain a plurality of through holes 128 for receiving the wires 134 (Figure 3). The outer plug 126 can be configured to slidably fit over the inner plug 130 and retain the free wire ends 134 therein. The free wire ends 134 nest against the vertical sides of the inner plug 130, between the protuberances.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 30, with the following redlined paragraph:

Figure 7 illustrates the cable 112 for attaching the handle 102 to the whisk-head coupling 106 (Figure 3). The cable 112 may be braided from stainless steel strands, or be made from other suitable motions and/or structures. An upper cable end 118 and a lower cable end 120 may be attached to grommets 122. Referring back to Figure 3, it can be seen that the grommets 122 can fixedly retain the cable 112 in the handle core 108 and the inner plug core 132, respectively. The braided cable 112 can reinforce and strengthen the flex zone 114. It is appreciated that one skilled in the art may choose other materials or material coatings for the braided cable 112, provided that such materials have sufficient strength and flexibility, for example, carbon fiber reinforced plastic or titanium. Additionally, one skilled in the art will

appreciate that other substantially similar components that have an ample amount of flexibility coupled with sufficient tensile strength may also be used instead of the braided cable.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 19, with the following redlined paragraph:

The assembly of the handle may likely commence by crimping the grommets 122 to each of the cable ends, 118 and 120, respectively. Next, about one quarter of each cable end, 118 and 120 (Figure 7), respectively, may be partially inserted into two separate molds (molds not shown) such that the remaining intermediate cable portion 114 remains exposed. The mold cavity in which the upper cable end 118 is inserted can be configured to form the shape of the handle core 108; whereas the mold cavity in which the lower cable end 120 is inserted can form the shape of the inner plug core 132. The mold cavities may be injected with plastic or other like material and then permitted to cure, thus forming the hardened plastic handle core 108 and inner plug core 132 wherein the cable ends 118 and 120 are fixedly encased and secured therein by the crimped-on grommets 122.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 10, with the following redlined paragraph:

The inner plug 130 may be slidably inserted over the hardened plastic inner plug core 132. To ensure that the inner plug core 132 remains securely fixed to the inner plug 130, the components may be coated with glue or epoxy resin prior to assembly. The entire assembly discussed thus far may then be placed into a final mold where soft, over-molded rubber or a similar material is injected around the handle core 108 and the exposed cable portion 114, thus forming the handle cover 110 (Figure 3) and the flex zone 114. The injected rubber used to form the handle cover 110 may also fill any voids existing between the inner plug 130 and outer plug 126 as noted by the extended tabs 136 depicted in Figure 4. The final step in the assembly process can be securing the collar 124 around the outer plug 126 by crimping, clamping, snapping, or welding the collar 124 thereon. The collar 124 can provide the finishing means to aesthetically bridge the region between the handle 102 (Figure 3) and the whisk-head 104.

Plastic may also be applied to the underside of the coupling 106 (Figure 3) to seal off the through holes where the free ends of the whisk wires were received.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 8, with the following redlined paragraph:

The handle 202 of this alternate embodiment can be formed with a handle core 208, which may be at least partially covered by a handle cover 210. The handle core 208 may be molded from plastic such as nylon, polypropylene, ABS, or any other material having comparable characteristics. The handle core 208 can be configured with an integral flex zone 214 where the distal portion of the flex zone 214 terminates at the coupling 206. The flex zone 214 is a region that allows the whisk-head 204 to resiliently deflect relative to the longitudinal axis of the handle 202 during whisk use. The handle core 208 with the integral flex zone 214 may be made from a soft, over-molded thermoplastic elastomer such as ~~Santoprene~~SANTOPRENE®, available from the Monsanto Corporation, or ~~Tekbond~~TEKBOND®, available from the Teknor Apex Corporation. The handle cover 210 may be made from a more rigid material to provide a bit more stiffness to the handle 202 and for enhanced gripping of the handle 202.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 26, with the following redlined paragraph:

The whisk-head wires described in the above embodiments may also be over-molded with a flexible material, which helps to preserve the surface of any mixing vessel and to reduce noise. Figure 11 illustrates one embodiment of a wire assembly 300 where at least a portion of the exterior surface of the whisk-head wire 302 is covered with a flexible material 304, for example silicone, ~~Teflon~~TEFLON®, or some other type of plastic.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 1, with the following redlined paragraph:

Figure 12 illustrates one method 310 of producing the wire assembly 300 illustrated in Figure 11. In Step 312, a whisk-head wire 302 that has not been manipulated into

any specific shape can be obtained from a stock of wire. For example, a straight whisk-head wire 302 could be used. Optionally, in Step 314, at least a portion of the wire can be primed. The type of primer used may be any number of resins or adhesives capable of bonding plastic, rubber or any other type of flexible material to metal. If the wires are covered with a material other than silicone, then the use of a primer may not be necessary. In Step 316, a flexible material 304 can be compression molded over at least the primed portion of the whisk-head wire 302 to create the wire assembly 300. In Step 318, the wire assembly 300 can be manipulated into any desired configuration such as the teardrop shape or any of the shapes discussed previously. In Step 320, the wire assembly 300 can be attached to the handle of the whisk.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 15, with the following redlined paragraph:

Figure 13 illustrates an alternate method 350 of producing the wire assembly 300 illustrated in Figure 11. In Step 352, a whisk-head wire 302 can be obtained. In Step 354, if the whisk-head wire 302 has not been pre-shaped, then in Step 356, the wire 302 can be manipulated into a shape that at least approximates the desired configuration. Either before or after Step 356 is performed, the optional Step 358 can be accomplished. In Step 358, a primer may be applied to at least a portion of the wire. However, primer may not be necessary if a material other than silicone is used. In Step 360, a flexible material 304 can be compression molded over the primed portion of the pre-shaped wire 302 to create the wire assembly 300. In Step 362, the wire assembly 300 can be attached to the handle of the whisk. In the present method, pre-shaping the whisk-head wire 302 and then compression molding the flexible material 304 thereon produces the wire assembly 300. The advantage of pre-shaping the wire 302 in the present method is to minimize the likelihood that the flexible material 304 will crack, tear, or disbond when the wire assembly 300 is manipulated.